

PERCEPTIONS TOWARD, INFORMATION RECALL OF,
AND LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT IN LAND USE ISSUES
IN DELAWARE COUNTY, OHIO

HONOR'S PROJECT

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Bachelor of Science in the College of Food, Agricultural and
Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University

By

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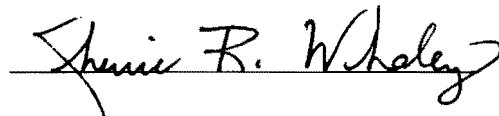
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To my parents, Dan and Jan Johnson, I dedicate this work. Thank
you for your mental, emotional, financial and spiritual support
throughout my college career.
To my fiancé, Eric Kaufman, I also dedicate this work. Thank you
for your time, patience, guidance and love.
I love you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals have influenced and helped me while completing this honors project at The Ohio State University. Now, I take the opportunity to thank some of them.

To Dr. Sherrie Whaley, for always having an open door, approachable personality, and immense dedication to this project and helping me to complete the commitment. What an encourager and driver you have been.

To Dr. Jan Henderson, for your friendly smile and extreme knowledge of research and your willingness to be a part of this challenge. Your guidance has been immeasurable.

To Otho Galen Johnson, the reason I started this project. Thank you for your support, guidance, determination and drive. You make me want to do a better job.

To Darin Johnson, the best brother, motivator and encourager. You force me to look into the future, without forgetting our past.

To Dr. and Mrs. Dan Johnson, my wonderful parents, for giving me the drive to do well from the very beginning. You both set a great example and were able to lead without pushing.

Finally, to my fiancé, Eric, my best friend and an incredible listener. Thank you for supporting me and giving me comfort in many times of stress. Thank you for making Ohio State such a great place.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Urban sprawl is a national problem that is attracting much attention both in media and governmental circles. Urban sprawl or one of the many terms that often accompany it (sprawl, smart growth, urban outmigration, suburban sprawl, land-use conflict, scatter development) is increasingly a topic addressed in newspaper and magazine articles, on television and radio broadcasts, on editorial pages and Internet web pages.

President Clinton jumped on the sprawl bandwagon in his 1999 State of the Union address, saying, "All our communities face a preservation challenge, as they grow and green space shrinks. Seven thousand acres of farmland and open space are lost every day." He proposed two separate \$1-billion initiatives to help communities save open space and preserve places of natural beauty, and to ease traffic congestion and enhance citizen's quality of life (Clinton, 1999).

Vice President Al Gore has also focused on this national issue by touting the advantages of "smart growth." Gore said America is losing 50 acres of farmland to development each hour and that smart growth will preserve family farms and a natural ecosystem (Will, 1999). "We have to stop sprawl," Gore told the Brookings Institution, "so that our kids will see horses, cows, and farms outside books and movies." (Hayward, 1999).

Urban sprawl is rarely portrayed in a positive light. Numerous examples of the major problems that result from sprawl can be found in the literature (Hulsey, 1996; Moe, 1996; Sorensen and Esseks, 1998). Some of the problems noted include that urban sprawl:

- Is a major factor in increased property taxes;
- Needlessly destroys the economic and environmental value of productive farmlands;

- Creates an inefficient land-use pattern that is very expensive to serve;
- Fuels competition, redundancy and conflict among local governments;
- Abandons established urban areas;
- Erodes a sense of community;
- Destroys the intrinsic visual character of the landscape.

Urban sprawl is not only seen as ugly, but also extremely wasteful, fiscally irresponsible, associated with long commutes, increased air and water pollution, and the destruction of natural habitat for fish and wildlife (Parry, 1998; Sierra Club, 1998).

However, not everyone agrees with the doom-and-gloom sprawl scenario. Its defenders (Will, 1999; Young, 1995) argue that sprawl actually reduces congestion in inner cities, forces cities to create more attractive urban environments in order to retain residents, and exists because it's precisely what people want.

"Sprawl," said Peter Linneman, "is something this country has been trying to do...since our creation" (Young, 1995). In the same report, Rodney Slater, administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, agreed, saying, "People generally don't want to stop sprawl [because it] encompasses the freedom and lifestyle they seek."

Steven Hayward (1999) also claims that the threat of sprawl is vastly overblown and that the anti-sprawl crusaders are "myopically focusing on small corners of the country."

Critics also claim that the sprawl hysteria is unfounded pointing to federal government statistics that the amount of U.S. farmland has been fairly constant at more than 450 million acres since 1945 and that the Department of Agriculture itself says "loss of farmland poses no threat to U.S. food and fiber production" (Will, 1999).

Agricultural economist Steven Blank argues that most Americans could not care less if farming and ranching disappear, as long they can get food. His thesis is that the U.S. economy no longer needs agriculture and is rapidly outgrowing it. Smart farmers, he said, are selling their land to developers as the nation turns to cheaper imported foods. (Blank, 1999).

Nevertheless, the Sierra Club, along with many individuals, organizations, and government agencies (Clark, 1998) has pronounced sprawl the fastest-growing threat to the environment and noted that urban sprawl is affecting cities from Atlanta to Seattle. Sprawl has been cited as a major reason that St. Louis, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. lost population throughout the 1990s. According to Katz & Bradley (1999), these cities are also losing their status as the most powerful economies in their regions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine Delaware County, Ohio citizens' perceptions toward farmland preservation, their degree of recall of news items related to urban sprawl, and their level of involvement in local governmental affairs. The researcher was interested in discovering not only what the citizens' perceptions are, but also what may account for some of the variation among these perceptions. For example, various personal characteristics, such as age or gender, may play a role in perceptual differences.

Objectives of the Study

Several issues related to urban sprawl emerged from the review of literature. These issues are presented in the form of objectives, which helped describe the aim of the study and served as guidelines in gathering the research data:

1. To describe the population of Delaware County landowners on the following characteristics: age, gender, education level, occupation, income level, length of residence, and farm background.
2. To determine the perceptions of Delaware County landowners toward farmland preservation.
3. To determine the level of recall of urban sprawl news coverage in local, state, and national media outlets by Delaware County landowners.
4. To determine the level of involvement of Delaware County landowners in local governmental affairs.
5. To determine the differences among three levels of involvement in local governmental affairs and knowledge of land use issues.
6. To determine the relationship between level of information recall and perceptions toward farmland preservation.

Significance of the Study

Although agricultural land in production is now satisfying the country's need for food and fiber, major consequences will follow if urban sprawl is not stopped. In Ohio, agriculture is the state's leading industry, supporting one in every six jobs and bringing \$56.2 billion a year into the state's economy ("Limiting Suburban Sprawl," 1997). However, according to the American Farmland Trust's 1997 study, "Farming on the Edge," Ohio ranks third in the nation in the amount of farmland lost to urban development.

In Ohio, the fastest-growing county in the state is Delaware County, the northern neighbor of Columbus' Franklin County. According to Donald Thomas (1998), demographer at The Ohio

State University, Delaware County saw its population increase a dramatic 30.6 percent from 1990-1997 as large numbers of non-farm residents have been attracted to its scenic countryside.

Delaware County was selected as the site for this research project because it is considered an at-risk county for urban sprawl problems. Examining its citizens' perceptions toward farmland preservation, what they can recall from various news items related to urban sprawl, and how involved they are in land use issues can be important as a means to provide data for decision-making.

Findings from this project should prove helpful to the Rural/Urban Task Force at The Ohio State University, the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Office of Farmland Preservation, and the Delaware County Farmland Preservation Task Force as these groups work to develop policies and legislation aimed at preserving farmland and lessening the threat of environmental consequences.

Better understanding citizen perceptions and where citizens receive information about urban sprawl will allow state and local agencies to better target intended audiences, communicate their messages more effectively, and, ultimately, make better informed policy decisions.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were operationally defined based upon their particular use in the research study:

1. Perceptions of Delaware County landowners toward farmland preservation. For this study, perceptions of Delaware County landowners toward farmland preservation was operationally defined as the mean score on a series of 14 statements related to farmland preservation.

2. Level of recall of land use issues in local, state and national media outlets. For this study, level of recall was operationally defined as the number of correct responses to a series of 18 statements taken from news accounts related to land use issues.

3. Level of involvement in local governmental affairs. For this study, level of involvement in local governmental affairs was operationally defined as the number of governmental affairs activities a respondent had participated in.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of literature was conducted to gain information regarding the issues and concerns related to urban sprawl and land use. The review is organized around the following five sections: Defining Urban Sprawl, Urban Sprawl on the National Scene, Sprawl's Impact on Community, Urban Sprawl in Ohio, and A Snapshot of Delaware County, Ohio.

Defining Urban Sprawl

What exactly constitutes sprawl? Many definitions of sprawl exist in the literature. Anthony Downs (Young, 1995) defines sprawl as “a specific form of suburbanization that involves extremely low-density settlement at the far edges of the settled area, spreading out far into previously undeveloped land.” Richard Moe, cited in *Alternatives to Sprawl*, (Young, 1995) goes a step further in defining sprawl as low density development on the edges of cities or towns that is “poorly planned, land-consumptive, automobile-dependent, designed without regard to its surroundings.”

Urban sprawl has been defined as unlimited, haphazard, low density development that wastes land, air and water resources, while driving communities apart in the competition for financial and human capital (Thompson, 1997). The American Heritage Dictionary (DeVine, 1985) defines urban sprawl as the gradual spreading of urban dwellings, businesses, and industry to the relatively unexploited land adjoining the urban area.

James Howard Kunstler has defined sprawl as “a degenerate urban form that is too congested to be efficient, too chaotic to be beautiful, and too dispersed to possess the diversity

and vitality of a great city” (1994). However sprawl is defined, it is generally agreed upon that it can have many negative impacts and few positive impacts on the countryside or the central city.

Urban Sprawl on the National Scene

Americans have doubled the development of farmland, forests, and other open space during the 1990s, according to a government report released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in late 1999. Nearly 16 million acres of land were converted to development between 1991-1997—a rate of 3.2 million acres per year. Between 1982-1992, the development rate was 1.4 million acres per year (“Spread of sprawl,” 1999).

Critics of the trend, including Vice President Al Gore, say it is hurting the environment and quality of living around the nation’s cities. “These new figures confirm what communities across America already know—too much of our precious open space is being gobbled up by sprawl,” said Gore, who has made suburban development and smart growth a signature issue in his presidential campaign (“Spread of sprawl,” 1999).

A recently released national report on suburban sprawl demonstrates that sprawl is not only hurting the environment, it is draining our pocketbooks and raising our taxes (“Sierra Club,” 2000). An Illinois farmland preservation study found that suburban sprawl is more expensive than most people, including local government officials, realize. The report indicated that taxpayers living in smaller homes that adjoin municipalities often subsidize the pastoral lifestyle enjoyed by those on the rural fringes of suburbs. Homes built in the far-flung rural areas do not generate enough tax revenue to pay for the education of children living in them or to build and maintain the roads, or to support new water and sewer systems. The study examined three formally all-rural sites in counties bordering Chicago (“Suburban Sprawl,” 2000).

It certainly seems that the phenomenon of sprawl has captured the attention of many communities and states. Nearly 200 state and local initiatives to curb sprawling development were on the November 1998 ballot and voters approved three-quarters of them (“Slow Growth,” 1998; Hayward, 1999).

In a speech last year, Vice President Gore focused on development, saying:

We’re starting to see that the lives of suburbs and cities are not at odds with one another but closely intertwined. No one in a suburb wants to live on the margins of a dying city. No one in the city wants to be trapped by surrounding rings of parking lots instead of thriving, livable suburban communities. And no one wants to do away with the open spaces and farmland that give food, beauty, and balance to our post-industrial, speeded-up lives (Katz & Bradley, 1999).

Sprawl’s Impact on Community

Recent statistics showing rapid loss of agricultural lands due to urban sprawl have sparked a new wave of public concern about farmland preservation throughout America (Daniels, 1999; Krieger, 1999). Moe and Wilkie (1997) note that virtually every community in the United States—certainly every metropolitan community—has been affected by sprawl. They conclude that one of the most significant sprawl battles to date was in 1993-94 when the Disney Company tried to locate a theme park in the northern Virginia Piedmont region, one of the most historic and pristine areas of the country. The central issue was not the theme park itself, but instead the development that it would inevitably attract that would overwhelm historic fragile villages, battlefields, and landscapes for miles in every direction.

Katz and Bradley (1999) observed that arguing against sprawl is possible because of a commitment to community. They explain that many people worry that they have lost a “sense of community” and would like to recreate “community.” In the suburbs of Detroit and Washington, D.C., developers are trying to build what people left behind when they fled to the suburbs: town

centers with wide sidewalks and big storefronts where a person can perhaps meet a friend and have a place to relax in public.

Suburbs are not new. They have existed in the United States since the nineteenth century. But hypersuburbanization, decentralization, and sprawl are new—less than two generations old (Katz & Bradley, 1999).

Sprawl's impact on community was noted by Moe and Wilkie (1997) who wrote of a “diminished sense of connections—social as well as spatial—in these pedestrian-unfriendly places.” They said that residents spend more time driving from place to place and less time with one another. Low density development means more automobile trips.

At the community level, developments encroaching on farmland and disputes over how to plan for the future use of land can cause a sense of hopelessness and frustration in citizens. Citizens often feel powerless to find and carry out solutions to the problems in their communities (Smith & Maretzki, 1999).

One Ohio community that mobilized to stop encroaching development was the college town of Yellow Springs, located east of Dayton. When the 940-acre Whitehall Farm went on the auction block, town residents staged rallies and parades, held fundraisers, marched in kazoo bands, made eye-catching signs with sayings such as “Save the Cows” and “No Sprawl,” and captured media attention with their relentless efforts to ensure that encroaching growth from Dayton and Fairborn came no closer to their bucolic village of 4,000. Their goal, as they saw it, was to preserve a way of life (Trump, 1999). They pooled donations, secured a bank loan, and showed up en masse at the auction with \$1.1 million in cash and pledges. However, with a winning bid of just over \$3 million, the farm's new owners were welcome buyers because they

announced plans to file for an environmental easement to ensure that the property is never sold for development (Glenn, 1999).

In Ohio, many other communities are attempting to develop new land-use policies in response to the recent upsurge of growth in previously rural areas. In fact, the battle is growing over who decides how Ohio cities expand. At present, state law gives cities almost unchecked power to absorb land from neighboring unincorporated areas as long as a majority of property owners in the proposed annexation area agree (Souhrada, 2000b).

Patton (2000) notes that the method public officials use to seek public input on land-use policy can be critical to future outcomes. The time-honored legislative public hearing almost invariably heightens the conflict, he said. Participants feel compelled to advocate their position on the issue and to attack the arguments being presented by “the other side.” Patton and his Ohio State University Extension colleagues are advocating the use of deliberative public forums which reveal common ground upon which public policy can be developed, educate people on the complexities of the issue, and reduce hostility among people with different interests.

Urban Sprawl in Ohio

Ohio’s metropolitan areas have all felt the effects of uncontrolled sprawl. In only a handful of states do so many metropolitan areas come nose to nose with such an abundance of prime agricultural land (Miller, et al, 1999). In fact, Schmidt (1998) revealed that Ohio has more urban land area than any other state in the nation, with 16 metropolitan areas each with more than 150,000 people.

In northeastern Ohio, where Cleveland is the largest city, it was concluded that sprawl is the highest ranked environmental problem facing Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina Counties (Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, 1998). In a Sierra Club report, Cincinnati

ranked as having the fourth worst urban sprawl problem among U.S. cities with more than 1 million people, while Akron was ranked fifth worst among cities with a population of 500,000 to 1 million (Clark, 1998). And the central Ohio region, which Columbus Dispatch staff reporter Jeff Ortega (1997) termed a “population magnet,” is also struggling with people pushing the borders of Columbus, its largest city, further into the surrounding countryside.

Ortega also noted “most of the largest urban counties in Ohio have lost population while most counties surrounding them gained.” It is these fast growing counties that are most at risk for the associated problems that often accompany sprawl (Hulsey, 1996).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that from 1982-1992, Ohio farmland was converted to various urban uses at the rate of 77 acres a day, which is equivalent to one average-sized Ohio family farm, lost every three days (“Limiting Suburban Sprawl,” 1997).

Esseks and McCallister (1986) wrote that “sprawl, which is common around large cities, not only destroys farmland but makes it harder for farmers living nearby to continue farming. In addition, new residents who move into the countryside may complain about smells and noises from farming operations.”

These conflicts in the countryside are becoming increasingly common, not only in Ohio, but nationally as well. Leo (1998) explained that agriculture is affected by expanding urban development in two different ways. First, development directly exhausts the agricultural productivity of reallocated tracts, while indirectly limiting the productive potential of surrounding farms, regardless of ownership. For every tract developed, often many acres of farmland are crippled for agricultural production as a result of conflicts with neighboring residential development.

In Ohio, 521,200 acres of farmland were developed between 1992 and 1997. That development has driven up land values, providing a windfall to many farmers who live near cities and choose to sell out (“Spread of sprawl,” 2000).

Robert and Bernice McClester, a Carroll County husband-wife farming team, spurned the temptation to cash in their land when they became the first Ohioans to donate an agricultural easement to the Ohio Department of Agriculture under a state law enacted in 1999. The agricultural conservation easement, known also as the purchase of development rights, limits future use of the land to agricultural uses. The McClester’s admitted that it would be very easy to break up their 254-acre farm and sell it in pieces. However, that wasn’t what they wanted to do. Bernice explained, “Every farm that goes up for sale here turns into 5-acre lots. We need the land to grow food.” (Souhrada, 2000a). Her husband of 60 years agreed saying, “Our idea is that a farm should stay a farm. This is a sure thing. No matter what, it will be protected.” (Keck, 2000).

Nonprofit groups have long used conservation easements to protect wilderness or wildlife areas and other open spaces. They are increasingly being used nationwide to preserve farmland (Williams, 1998). By voluntarily selling easements, farmers continue to own the land, but are barred from pursuing nonfarm activities. Supporters of the easement programs say they help channel sprawl and maintain farm clusters needed to ensure a viable agricultural supply and support network (“Spread of sprawl,” 2000).

Fred Dailey, director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture, said, “If Ohio is to have a long-term viable industry, we must start now to preserve the land necessary for the production of food.” (White, 2000).

Ohio Governor Bob Taft, who made farmland preservation a campaign issue during his race with former Attorney General Lee Fisher, has asked the state legislature to approve a pair of

\$200 million bond offerings. One would help cities clean up polluted industrial sites, while the other would pay for “greenways” such as parks, bike paths, trails, and development rights to farmland (Souhrada, 2000a).

Agricultural economist Allan Lines, from The Ohio State University, expects urban pressure to keep Ohio farmland prices strong. Lines notes that Ohio’s farmland value trends reflect, and benefit from, pressures of urban and non-farm development. “There’s a higher intensity in Ohio for non-farm development than in states to the west. There are hardly any places in Ohio where you can say this is raw, raw farm country without any urban pressure,” Lines said. The strength of Ohio’s farmland values is in stark contrast to values in the Great Plains states where prices for good wheat-producing land recently dipped by 11 to 15 percent, Lines noted (“Urban pressure,” 2000).

A look into Ohio’s future finds that the 18 counties in Ohio that are projected to experience a net loss in population by 2015 are generally rural and are located in the state’s north central and southeastern regions (Gliem, 2000). The state’s greatest population growth, in general, is occurring in counties next to major cities, particularly the 12 counties on the fringe of the state’s three largest metropolitan areas. According to Jeff Sharp, rural sociologist at The Ohio State University, these counties are at the heart of the rural-urban interface where both rural and urban populations share problems. The counties include Brown, Clermont and Warren near Cincinnati; Delaware, Licking, Fairfield, Pickaway and Madison near Columbus; and Medina, Portage, Geauga and Ashtabula near Cleveland (Sharp, 2000).

Katz and Bradley (1999) revealed that 90% of the new jobs created in Ohio’s major urbanized areas from 1994 to 1997 were in the suburbs. The central business districts of Ohio’s seven largest cities had a net gain of only 19,510 jobs; their suburbs gained 186,000.

A Snapshot of Delaware County

Delaware County is located in central Ohio, just north of Franklin County, home to the state's capital city of Columbus. It has had the distinction of being Ohio's fastest-growing county for over ten years and the future appears to hold more of the same. Delaware County leads the state of Ohio in projected percent population increase from 1995 to 2015 with a projected increase of 53percent (Gliem, 2000).

According to 1990 U.S. Census Data, Delaware County had 2,291 individuals residing on a farm, while 34,659 residents were classified as nonfarm rural residents. The remainder of the county's 66,929 citizens were classified as urban residents, living either inside or outside of an urbanized area (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990). In 1997, there were 700 farms in the county with a total of 170,000 acres of farmland. Hogs generated the largest amount of livestock farm income, while soybeans generated the largest amount of crop farm income (Data Center, 1999).

The average value of an acre of Delaware County farmland has risen 28.4%, from \$2,352 to \$3,019 (Williams, 1999).

Twelve Delaware County citizens were appointed by county commissioners to a Farmland Preservation Task Force in July, 1998. The task force was charged with bringing commissioners ideas and plans on how to preserve farmland in Delaware County. The task force is one of 59 throughout the state working to develop farmland preservation strategies ("Ohio's Farmland Preservation Project Update," 1999). A \$10,000 state grant was awarded the Delaware County group for assistance in analyzing their community. This honors project is a direct beneficiary of the grant and received partial funding from the Delaware County Farmland Preservation Task Force.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used both descriptive and correlational research methods. Because the study sought to describe selected demographic characteristics of Delaware County landowners, determine perceptions of landowners toward farmland preservation, determine landowner's level of recall of land use issues in media outlets, determine landowners involvement level in land use issues, determine differences among involvement levels in local governmental affairs and level of recall of land use issues, and to determine if relationships exist between level of recall and perceptions toward farmland preservation, this research was labeled descriptive-correlational.

Population

The target population for this study included Delaware County residents (N=19,532) who owned parcels of less than five acres outside the city limits of Delaware. A database of these individuals was obtained from the Office of the Delaware County Auditor and was dated September 1998.

Individuals who resided within the city limits of Delaware and county residents who owned five acres or more were intentionally excluded from the study. It was assumed that citizens who owned land within the Delaware city limits would own very small parcels of land, while those citizens who owned five acres or more could conceivably be farming the land. Neither of these two groups were the target group the researcher wished to concentrate on.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted with only Delaware County residents (N=19,532) who owned parcels of less than five acres outside the city limits of Delaware. The study was further limited to a random sample (n=377) of landowners, who were selected to receive a questionnaire.

Subject Selection

From the county auditor's database, a random sample of 377 landowners was selected to receive a mail questionnaire. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), 377 is an appropriate sample size to generalize results to the accessible population of 19,532 landowners. Sampling error was controlled by ensuring an adequate sample size and by using proper techniques of random sampling as outlined by Singleton, Straits, Straits, and McAllister (1988).

Due to frame error, 81 questionnaires from the original mailing were returned as undeliverable due to problems such as moved with no forwarding address, no mail receptacle, forwarding time expired, no such number or no such street. Therefore, 65 additional names were randomly selected from the Delaware County phone book and included in the sample; 39 questionnaires were returned from this second sample.

Instrumentation

A written questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed by the researcher to collect data for the research study. The five-part instrument was designed specifically for Delaware County citizens and collected data relating to the research objectives: a) perceptions toward farmland preservation, b) recall level of urban sprawl news coverage, c) involvement level in local governmental affairs, d) personal characteristics, e) differences among levels of involvement and

knowledge of land use issues, and f) the relationship between information recall levels and perceptions toward farmland preservation.

Part I of the questionnaire consisted of six questions related to land use in Delaware County. Items included defining farmland preservation, land preservation scenarios, determining if farmland or open space is the most important to preserve, orientation toward farmland preservation, how much citizens would pay annually to protect county farmland, and what source of public money should be used to fund such efforts.

Community perception and involvement variables were measured in Part II of the questionnaire with five questions related to threats to the future of Delaware County, involvement in local community activities and events, the meaning of local government, involvement in county land use issues, and involvement in local governmental affairs.

Part III of the questionnaire collected data relating to media habits. Eleven questions dealt with how many days per week respondents read, watched, or listened to various media, which national news magazines or local newspapers were read regularly, whether respondents had read or heard anything about urban sprawl in the media within the past year, a ranking of the top three communication outlets for urban sprawl information, and news accounts related to urban sprawl.

Part IV of the questionnaire collected demographic information including age, gender, race, how long a respondent had lived in the county, where the respondent lives, if they own or rent their current residence, educational level, employment status, and annual gross household income.

An open-ended question comprised Part V of the questionnaire and asked respondents for any additional comments they had concerning land use in Delaware County.

Validity

Face validity of the instrument was established by a panel of experts (Appendix B). The panel of experts was selected based upon their familiarity with Delaware County, research design methodologies, and the specific population under study.

Content validity of the instrument was established by a field test with nine government-sector employees in the Delaware County Federal Government Office Building. This content assessment was conducted to determine whether the instrument serves the purpose for which it was designed or whether further revision was needed (Singleton et al., 1988). The field test group was asked to address the following aspects of the questionnaire: a) item content and clarity, b) wording, c) length of the instrument, and d) format and overall instrument appearance.

Reliability

Statistical reliability of the researcher-developed instrument was established through a pilot test with 10 purposefully selected members of a Sunday School class at Liberty Presbyterian Church, located in southern Delaware County. A test-retest procedure was employed with the pilot test group completing the same instrument before and after a one-week time interval. Responses obtained from the second administration of the instrument was compared to initial responses and a percent of agreement was analyzed for each respondent. The pilot test was used to determine the coefficient of stability for Parts I, II and III of the questionnaire. Coefficients of stability ranged from 100% to 58% for items. Sixty-two percent of respondents had perfect matches between the two instruments, while twenty-five percent of respondents had near matches. The average score across all respondents was calculated as test-retest reliability. The

overall coefficient of stability for all 22 items was 70%. Information from the validity and reliability tests was used to revise the instrument prior to distribution to the sample.

Data Collection

Data for the study was collected by mail questionnaire. The design and mailing procedures for the instrument was based on the recommendations of Dillman (1978). The questionnaire guaranteed anonymity to respondents and was coded only to allow for necessary follow-up contact.

A cover letter (Appendix C), the questionnaire, and a self-addressed return envelope was mailed to the sample group on February 9, 2000. A Valentine's Day incentive of a red heart sucker was included in each envelope, which was stamped with red hearts, in an effort to obtain a higher rate of return for the instrument. Two weeks after the first mailing, a list of non-respondents was compiled. A follow-up mailing with a Jolly Rancher inside was sent to all non-respondents in an effort to obtain more responses. A post card reminder was sent two weeks later to the non-respondents (Appendix D).

Due to frame error, 65 additional names were selected from the Delaware County phone book for the study. On February 23, 2000, a first-mailing was sent to the "phone book" group consisting of a cover letter, the questionnaire, a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and a Jolly Rancher incentive. Two weeks later, the non-respondents received a follow-up mailing. A post card reminder was then sent two weeks later to all remaining non-respondents.

The deadline for data collection was March 15, 2000. An additional incentive for respondents was the chance to be entered into a random drawing for a \$50 money order. The drawing was held on March 17, 2000 (Appendix E).

To control for non-response error, a random sample of ten percent of the non-respondents was contacted by telephone to collect demographic data. These data were compared to corresponding data from the respondents to determine if there were significant differences between the two groups. This method of comparing respondents to non-respondents is an appropriate method of controlling for non-response error (Miller & Smith, 1983).

Analysis of Data

Descriptive and correlational statistics were used to analyze the data collected using SPSS/PC+ statistical software. General measures of association were described according to Davis' (1971) conventions (see Table 1). Qualitative data from an open-ended question were analyzed and summarized by the researcher.

Table 1

Davis' Conventions of Number Magnitude

<u>r</u>	<u>Description</u>
1.0	perfect association
0.70 to 0.99	very high association
0.50 to 0.69	substantial association
0.30 to 0.49	moderate association
0.10 to 0.29	low association
0.01 to 0.09	negligible association

Source: J.A. Davis (1971)

Descriptive statistics of means, frequencies, standard deviations, ranges, and percentages were calculated on data related to:

Objective 1: Delaware County landowners' age, gender, education level, occupation, income level, length of residence, and farm background.

Objective 2: Delaware County landowners' perceptions toward farmland preservation.

Objective 3: Delaware County landowners' level of recall of land use issues in local, state and national media outlets.

Objective 4: Level of involvement of Delaware County landowners in local governmental affairs.

Analysis of variance was performed to determine differences among:

Objective 5: Three levels of involvement in local governmental affairs and level of recall of land use issues.

Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the relationships between:

Objective 6: Level of recall and perceptions toward farmland preservation.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the research study and is organized into eight major sections: a) a summary of the data sample; b) a description of the sample based upon demographic characteristics; c) a description of Delaware County landowner's perceptions toward farmland preservation; d) a determination of the level of involvement of Delaware County landowners in land use issues; e) a description of Delaware County landowner's level of recall of urban sprawl news coverage; f) a determination of the differences among involvement levels in local governmental affairs and recall of land use issues; g) a determination of the relationship between level of recall and perceptions toward farmland preservation; and h) a synthesis of open-ended responses given by the sample.

Data Sample

Useable instruments were received from 61 percent of the landowner respondents. To measure non-response error, respondents (n=219) were compared to a 10% sample of non-respondents (n=14).

Respondents and non-respondents were similar in terms of gender composition, income level, educational level, and home ownership. However, non-respondents tended to be younger, lived in the county fewer years, and were employed full-time at a higher percentage when compared to respondents. Therefore, caution should be used when generalizing the findings of this study to the population of Delaware County landowners from which the sample was drawn.

Description of the Sample's Demographic Characteristics

Age and Gender

A description of the sample's demographic characteristics can be found in Tables 2 through 9. The mean age of the respondents was 49 years. The youngest respondent was 16 years, while the oldest to respond was 85 years old (Table 2).

Males comprised 130 (61%) of the respondents, while females totaled 83 (39%) of respondents.

Table 2

Age Breakdown of Respondents (n=209)

Age Group	f	P
Under 20	1	0.5
20-29	9	4.3
30-39	46	22.0
40-49	63	30.0
50-59	44	21.0
60-69	25	12.0
70-79	16	8.0
80-89	5	2.0
Total	209	100.0
<u>Note.</u> Mean = 49 S.D. = 13.89 Min = 16 Max = 85		

Race

As shown in Table 3, an overwhelming majority (95%) of the respondents were white. Two respondents were African American, two were Asian, two were Native American/American Indian, and one was Hispanic/Latino. Three respondents indicated their ethnic background as “other.”

Table 3

Racial Composition of Respondents (n=213)

Race	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
African American	2	0.9
Asian	2	0.9
Hispanic/Latino	1	0.5
Native American/American	2	0.9
White	203	95.3
Other	3	1.4
Total	213	100.0

Residency Issues

Residency in Delaware County was determined by the number of years a respondent had lived in the county. As presented in Table 4, respondents were grouped into nine categories based on the number of years they had resided in Delaware County. The average number of years respondents had lived in Delaware County was 18. Findings revealed that the two categories of one-nine years and 10-19 years captured a majority of respondents (65%). Two

respondents reported living in the county for less than one year, while three respondents had lived in the county for 78 years.

Tables 5 and 6 summarize data relating to where residents live and whether they own or rent their residence. A majority of respondents (60%) indicated that they reside in a township, while 22% live in a town and 13% live in a village. Respondents most often reported that they own their current residence (98%). Only three respondents reported that they rented their current residence or had some other arrangement.

Table 4

Length of Residency in Delaware County (n=207)

Years Lived in County	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
< 1 year	2	1.0
1-9 years	94	45.0
10-19 years	41	20.0
20-29 years	22	11.0
30-39 years	19	9.0
40-49 years	9	5.0
50-59 years	7	3.0
60-69 years	5	2.0
Over 70 years	8	4.0
Total	207	100.0
<u>Note.</u> Mean = 18 S.D. = 19.40 Min = less than one year Max = 78		

Table 5

Classification of Where Residents Live (n=211)

Where Live	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Town	47	22.0
Township	126	60.0
Village	28	13.0
Other	10	5.0
Total	211	100.0

Table 6

Ownership Status of Current Residence (n=213)

Ownership Status	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Own	210	98.6
Rent	2	0.9
Have other arrangement	1	0.5
Total	213	100.0

Education Level of Respondents

Data reported in Table 7 reveal that a majority of respondents (36%) hold a bachelor's degree, while 28% had either some college, an associate's degree, or had completed technical school. A graduate or professional degree was held by 23% of respondents, 11% were high school graduates, and ? percent had a ninth-12th grade education, but no diploma.

Table 7

Highest Educational Degree of Respondents (n=214)

Degree	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Less than 9 th grade	0	0.0
9 th -12 th grade, no diploma	5	2.0
High school graduate or equivalency	23	11.0
Some college; associate degree; or completed technical school	59	28.0
Bachelor's degree	77	36.0
Graduate or professional degree	50	23.0
Total	214	100.0

Employment Status

As reported by the respondents in Table 8, 140 (65%) are employed full-time, as compared to 19 (9%) of the respondents who are part-time employees. Sixteen percent or 35 of the respondents are retired, while 15 (7%) are full-time homemakers. No respondents are unemployed.

Table 8

Employment Status of Respondents (n=214)

Employment Status	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Full-time	140	65.0
Part-time	19	9.0
Retired	35	16.0
Full-time homemaker	15	7.0
Student	1	1.0
Unemployed	0	0.0
Other	4	2.0
Total	214	100.0

Household Income

Approximately one-quarter of the respondents reported an annual gross household income of between \$100,000-199,999 (Table 9). Fifteen percent of respondents reported income ranging from \$30,000-49,999. Respondents were almost evenly split in the income ranges of \$50,000-59,999 (10%), \$60,000-69,999 (11%), \$70,000-79,999 (11%), and \$90,000-99,999 (11%). Six percent of respondents reported annual income of \$200,000 or more.

Table 9

Annual Gross Household Income Before Taxes (n=196)

Income Range	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
\$29,000 or less	15	8.0
\$30,000-49,999	29	15.0
\$50,000-59,999	20	10.0
\$60,000-69,999	21	11.0
\$70,000-79,999	21	11.0
\$80,000-89,999	9	4.0
\$90,000-99,999	21	11.0
\$100,000-199,999	48	24.0
\$200,000 or more	12	6.0
Total	196	100.0

Perceptions toward Farmland Preservation

One intent of the study was to determine the perceptions of Delaware County landowners toward farmland preservation. Perceptions pertaining to defining farmland preservation, land preservation scenarios, what is most important to preserve, orientation toward farmland preservation, how much landowners would be willing to pay to permanently protect county farmland, and which source of public money would be best for funding farmland preservation efforts are highlighted in this section.

Defining Farmland Preservation

As illustrated in Table 10, 40% of respondents define farmland preservation as “preserving farmland for a profitable farm industry.” “Preserving farmland for small-scale

operations” was the definition selected by 26% of respondents, while 23% defined farmland preservation as “preserving rural character.” Twelve percent chose “preserving open space” as the definition that most closely related to what the term farmland preservation meant to them.

Table 10

Definition that Most Closely Relates to Term “Farmland Preservation” (n=205)

Definition	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Preserving open space	24	11.0
Preserving farmland for a profitable farm industry	81	40.0
Preserving farmland for small-scale operations	53	26.0
Preserving rural character	47	23.0
Total	205	100.0

Land Preservation Scenarios

A number of land preservation scenarios were offered to respondents. An inspection of Table 11 shows that a majority of respondents (72%) favor establishment of a “green belt” around their community where new homes, businesses or stores could not be built on land that is currently undeveloped. Fifty-six percent favor the ability of landowners to sell easements to governments in order to protect their land for agricultural use. A majority of respondents (71%) favor the use of tougher zoning laws in Delaware County to halt the momentum of sprawl. While 59% oppose an increase in county taxes to help pay for farmland preservation, an increase in county taxes to help pay for open space was also opposed by most respondents (52%).

Respondents did favor (65%) an increase in user fees, such as building permit fees and planning subdivision fees, to help pay for farmland preservation.

Table 11

Land Preservation Scenarios

Scenario	Favor		Oppose		Undecided	
	f	P	f	P	f	P
The establishment of a zone or greenbelt around your community where new homes, businesses or stores could not be built on land is currently undeveloped. (n=209)	150	72.0	28	13.0	31	15.0
The ability of landowners to sell easements to governments in order to protect their land for agricultural use. (n=213)	119	56.0	26	12.0	68	32.0
The use of tougher zoning laws in Delaware County to halt the momentum of sprawl. (n=213)	151	71.0	27	13.0	35	16.0
An increase in county taxes to help pay for farmland preservation. (n=213)	24	11.0	125	59.0	64	30.0
An increase in county taxes to help pay for open space. (n=213)	38	18.0	110	52.0	65	30.0
An increase in user fees, such as building permit fees and planning subdivision fees, to help pay for farmland preservation. (n=213)	138	65.0	49	23.0	26	12.0

Most Important to Preserve

As illustrated in Table 12, landowners were almost evenly split on whether farmland or open space is the most important to preserve. Forty-five percent indicated that farmland was most important to preserve, while 43% reported that open space was most important to preserve.

Table 12

What Is Most Important to Preserve (n=213)

Most Important	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Farmland	95	45.0
Open space	92	43.0
Other	26	12.0
Total	213	100.0

Perceptions of Farmland Preservation

Fourteen statements related to farmland preservation were offered to ascertain respondent's perceptions of farmland preservation. Respondents indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. With a possible range of scores between 14 and 56, a higher score indicates a more positive perception toward farmland preservation. The range of scores for respondents (n=216) was eight to 48 with a mean score of 33 and a standard deviation of 7.91.

Amount Willing to Pay Annually to Permanently Protect Farmland

As presented in Table 13, the largest group of respondents (42%) is unwilling to pay anything to permanently protect farmland in Delaware County. However, 40% of respondents were willing to pay \$1-\$74 per year to protect Delaware County farmland.

Table 13

Willing to Pay Per Year to Permanently Protect County Farmland (n=209)

Amount	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Zero	87	42.0
\$1 - \$19	40	19.0
\$20- \$49	23	11.0
\$50- \$74	22	10.0
\$75 - \$99	12	6.0
Over \$100	10	5.0
Other	15	7.0
Total	209	100.0

Source of Public Money to Fund Farmland Preservation Efforts

Although 29% of respondents did not believe any public money should be used for farmland preservation efforts (Table 14), 26% indicated that recoupment fees assessed when agricultural land is sold would be the best source of public money for such efforts. Conveyance fees assessed when property is transferred into a new owner's name was the public money of choice for 17% of respondents, while sales tax was selected by 15% as the source of public money that would be the best source for funding farmland preservation efforts.

Table 14

Sources of Public Money for Funding Farmland Preservation Efforts (n=204)

Public Money Sources	f	P
Property Tax	11	5.0
Income Tax	8	4.0
Sales Tax	30	15.0
Revenue Bonds	9	4.0
Conveyance Fees	34	17.0
Recoupment Fees	52	25.5
None	59	29.0
Other	1	0.5
Total	209	100.0

Community Perception and Levels of Involvement in Local Governmental Affairs

An additional intent of this study was to describe community perceptions of respondents and their level of involvement in local governmental affairs. This section describes respondent's perceived threats to the future of Delaware County, and their levels of involvement in community activities and events, in urban sprawl and land use issues, and in local governmental affairs.

Threats to the Future of Delaware County

An analysis of respondent's perceived threats to the future of Delaware County is presented in Table 15. The five highest-ranking threats were unplanned growth (59%), lack of leadership (51%), declining quality of schools (49%), increase in crime (48%), and the failure of people to work together (46%). Loss of farmland and loss of profitable farms ranked ninth and

tenth, respectively, while loss of open space was the seventh most severe threat to the future of Delaware County.

Level of Involvement in Community Activities and Events

As shown in Table 16, an almost even split of respondents reported that they were either somewhat active (38%), or not very active (37%) in local community activities and events.

Twenty-three percent of respondents indicated they were not at all active. It was determined that two percent of respondents were very active in local community activities and events.

Terms that Constitute Local Government

Respondents were asked to designate which of four terms (county, township, watershed, or municipality) constituted local government to them. Figures contained in Table 17 show that the top two choices of respondents were county (65%), followed by township (63%).

Municipality was selected by 38% of respondents, while watershed was chosen by 9%.

Level of Involvement in County Land Use Issues When Compared to Others

Information presented in Table 18 pertains to respondent's level of involvement in Delaware County urban sprawl/land use issues when compared to others in their neighborhood. Three-quarters of the respondents indicated they were either not at all active (43%) or not very active (36%) in county land use issues when compared to others in their neighborhood. Two percent of respondents reported being very active in such issues.

Table 15

Perceived Threats to the Future of Delaware County

Threats	Severely Threatens		Somewhat Threatens		Doesn't Threaten		Don't Know	
	f	P	f	P	f	P	f	P
Unplanned growth (n=210)	124	59.0	67	32.0	7	3.0	12	6.0
Lack of leadership (n=210)	108	51.0	73	35.0	10	5.0	19	9.0
Declining quality of schools (n=210)	103	49.0	72	34.0	23	11.0	12	6.0
Increase in crime (n=208)	99	48.0	82	39.0	16	8.0	11	5.0
Failure of people to work together (n=210)	97	46.0	80	38.0	13	6.0	20	9.0
Indifference toward the community (n=210)	91	43.0	83	39.0	12	6.0	24	11.0
Loss of open space (n=210)	81	39.0	99	47.0	19	9.0	10	5.0
Loss of community spirit (n=210)	73	35.0	100	48.0	19	9.0	18	9.0
Loss of farmland (n=210)	63	30.0	91	43.0	37	18.0	19	9.0
Loss of profitable farms (n=210)	55	26.0	93	44.0	34	16.0	28	13.0
Move people moving into Delaware Co. (n=210)	53	25.0	87	41.0	52	25.0	18	9.0
Increase in taxes (n=210)	38	18.0	113	54.0	44	21.0	15	7.0

Table 16

Level of Involvement in Community Activities and Events (n=209)

Level of Involvement	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Very Active	5	2.0
Somewhat Active	79	38.0
Not Very Active	77	37.0
Not At All Active	48	23.0
Total	209	100.0

Table 17

Terms that Constitute Local Government (n=207)

Term	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
County	135	65.0
Township	130	63.0
Watershed	18	9.0
Municipality	79	38.0

Table 18

Level of Involvement in Land Use Issues (n=210)

Level of Involvement	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Very Active	5	2.0
Somewhat Active	39	19.0
Not Very Active	76	36.0
Not At All Active	90	43.0
Total	210	100.0

Level of Involvement in Local Governmental Affairs

As illustrated in Table 19, a majority of respondents (57%) indicated no involvement in local governmental affairs. Forty-six respondents (22%) indicated involvement in one of the following activities: held public office, served on a government board/ committee in Delaware County in the last five years, contacted a local government official about a land use issue in the last year, or attended a local or regional government meeting in the last year.

Forty-four respondents (21%) reported involvement with at least two of the following activities: held public office, served on a government board/ committee in Delaware County in the last five years, contacted a local government official about a land use issue in the last year, or attended a local or regional government meeting in the last year.

Table 19

Level of Involvement in Local Governmental Affairs (n=210)

Level of Involvement	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
No Involvement	120	57.0
Involved in <u>one</u> of the following:	46	22.0
a. Held public office or served on county government board/committee in last 5 years		
b. Contacted local government official about land use issue in the last year		
c. Attended local or regional government meeting in last year		
Involved in <u>at least two</u> of the following:	44	21.0
a. Held public office or served on county government board/committee in last 5 years		
b. Contacted local government official about land use issue in the last year		
c. Attended local or regional government meeting in last year		
Total	210	100.0

Media Habits and Level of Recall of Land Use Issues

Another intent of this study was to determine media habits of respondents and their level of recall of land use issues in local, state and national media outlets. Highlighted in this section is national news magazines and local newspapers regularly read, days per week various mass media

sources are watched, read or listened to, the top three communication outlets for urban sprawl information, and level of information recall for news items related to land use issues.

National Weekly News Magazines Regularly Read

As shown in Table 20, the largest group of respondents (61%) reported that they did not read any national weekly news magazines on a regular basis. Magazine categories included *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Business Week*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. Of those who indicated they did regularly read a weekly news magazine, *Time* was the magazine read most often by respondents (15%), followed by *Newsweek* (13%).

Table 20

Weekly News Magazines Read on Regular Basis (n=213)

Magazine	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
None	129	61.0
Time	32	15.0
Newsweek	27	13.0
Business Week	23	11.0
U.S. News & World Report	19	9.0
Other	15	7.0

Weekly News Consumption by Media Outlet

Respondents were asked to indicate how many days per week they watched, listened to, or read news from various media outlets. Data presented in Table 21 indicate that respondents most often watch local television and read local daily newspapers, with a mean consumption rate

of five days per week for each outlet. National and/or local news is listened to on the radio an average of 4.6 days per week. National news programming on television is watched an average of 4.4 days per week. Local weekly newspapers were read an average of 1.4 days a week, while national newspapers were read an average of 1.1 days per week.

Table 21

Weekly News Consumption by Media Outlet (n=208)

Media Outlet	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Local news on television	5.0	2.28
Local daily newspaper	5.0	2.60
National and/or local news on radio	4.6	2.37
National news on television	4.4	2.32
Local weekly newspaper	1.4	1.46
National newspaper	1.1	1.85

Local Newspapers Read on A Regular Basis

Local newspapers read on a regular basis by respondents are presented in Table 22. A majority (82%) of respondents read *The Columbus Dispatch*, followed by a Suburban News Publication (48%), and the *Delaware Gazette* (32%). Three percent of respondents reported that they read no local newspaper on a regular basis.

Table 22

Local Newspapers Read on A Regular Basis (n=213)

Newspaper	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
The Columbus Dispatch	174	82.0
Suburban News Publication	101	48.0
Delaware Gazette	68	32.0
Delaware This Week	54	26.0
Olentangy Valley News	47	22.0
The Other Paper	22	10.0
Alive	2	1.0
None	7	3.0

Awareness of Urban Sprawl Issues in News Media

Sixty percent of respondents reported that they had read or heard about the issue of urban sprawl in the news media within the past year, while 40% indicated that had not read or heard anything about the issue or urban sprawl in the news media within the past year (Table 23).

Table 23

Awareness of Urban Sprawl Issues in News Media (n=210)

Have you read or heard anything about the issue of urban sprawl in the news media within the past year?	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Yes	127	60.0
No	83	40.0

Level of Recall of Urban Sprawl Issues from News Accounts

Respondents who indicated that they had read or heard something about the issue of urban sprawl in the news media within the past year were asked their level of recall on 18 items from news accounts related to urban sprawl issues. Scores could range from 0 to 18 with a higher score indicating a higher level of recall of land use issues. The mean score for the 127 land-owners on the 18 items was four (S.D. 2.84) with a range between 0 and 14.

Top Communication Outlets for Urban Sprawl Information

The top-ranking communication outlet for urban sprawl information (Table 24) was newspaper for 65% of respondents, followed by television (28%) and neighbor/friends (24%).

Table 24

Top Communication Outlets for Urban Sprawl Information (n=127)

Communication Outlet	<u>f</u>	<u>P</u>
Newspaper	71	65.0
Television	23	28.0
Neighbor or friends	12	24.0
Radio	9	13.0
Magazine	5	18.0
Internet	1	14.0
Other	3	60.0

Differences Among Three Levels of Involvement in Local Governmental Affairs and Level of Recall of Land Use Issues

As shown in Table 25, no statistically significant differences existed among the three levels of involvement in local governmental affairs and level of recall of land use issues by respondents.

Table 25

Differences Among Three Levels of Involvement in Local Governmental Affairs and Knowledge of Land Use Issues (n=131)

Level of Involvement	N	M	SD	df	F	Sig.
No involvement	61	3.98	2.97	2	0.45	0.64
Involved in one governmental affairs activity	36	4.00	2.06	128		
Involved in at least two governmental affairs activities	34	4.53	3.36			

Relationship Between Level of Recall of Land Use Issues and Perceptions Toward Farmland Preservation

There is a non-statistically significant low correlation ($r=.12$) between level of recall of land use issues and perceptions toward farmland preservation.

Summary of Open-ended Comments

An open-ended question asked respondents for any additional comments they had concerning land use in Delaware County. Through the responses, six main categories of comments emerged; a) county commissioners and an overall lack of planning, b) low density/high density housing, c) zoning laws, d) comments regarding farmers, e) comments related to open space and wildlife preservation, and f) others.

Eleven respondents wrote comments concerning the lack of planning for Delaware County and many blamed the commissioners for their lack of “vision” for the county. “Vision is essential when planning,” said one respondent. “Unfortunately, Delaware County reflects a ‘knee jerk’ kind of mentality when it comes to growth.”

Thirteen people remarked about issues concerning low-density and high-density issues. Respondents want a fix to traffic congestion, but also want homes to be built on one to five acres, no less. Their complaints were about overcrowding in schools, county roadways, and in housing developments.

Four respondents voiced frustration with zoning laws and a perceived lack of enforcement. One respondent said, “Present zoning regulations are not always followed, nor enforced.” Another respondent voiced frustration with the red tape Delaware County citizens face when building new homes.

Twelve respondents made positive comments related to farmers. Several respondents noted that farms also play a role in providing a sense of community. “I really want to see us keep our farmland in Delaware County. Growth is good, but I hope we can keep our close community,” said one respondent. Others appeared genuinely surprised at how uninformed they were about the land use issues in Delaware County. “I am surprised at how uninformed I am

being a daughter of a farm girl. My mom still owns a farm, yet, I haven't paid attention to this problem," admitted one respondent.

Seven respondents also commented on the desire for additional open space and wildlife preservation. Respondents seem to want more parks, trees and natural scenes around their county. One respondent said, "The most important thing to me personally is open space. I value the family farm as part of tradition and as valuable in and of itself – but it's closed to the public!"

There were 12 respondents who wrote comments, but they didn't seem to fit into any specific category. One respondent said, "When the common good comes up against personal greed, never assume the common good will win."

A complete compilation of all respondents' answers to the open-ended question can be found in Appendix F.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine Delaware County, Ohio citizens' perceptions of land use issues, their degree of recall of news items related to urban sprawl, and their level of involvement in local governmental affairs. The researcher was interested in discovering not only what the citizens' perceptions are, but also what may account for some of the variations among these perceptions. For example, various personal characteristics, such as age or gender, may play a role in perceptual differences.

Objectives

Several issues related to urban sprawl emerged from the review of literature. These issues are presented in the form of objectives, which helped describe the aim of the study and served as guidelines in gathering the research data:

1. To describe the population of Delaware County landowners on the following characteristics: age, gender, education level, occupation, income level, length of residence, and farm background.
2. To determine the perceptions of Delaware County landowners toward farmland preservation.
3. To determine the level of recall of urban sprawl news coverage in local, state and national media outlets by Delaware County landowners.

4. To determine the level of involvement of Delaware County landowners in local governmental affairs.
5. To determine the differences among three levels of involvement in local governmental affairs and knowledge of land use issues.
6. To determine the relationship between level of information recall and perceptions toward farmland preservation.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study was Delaware County residents (N=19,532) who owned parcels of less than five acres outside the city limits of Delaware. A database of these individuals was obtained from the Office of the Delaware County Auditor and was dated September 1998.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted with only Delaware County residents (N=19,532) who owned parcels of less than five acres outside the city limits of Delaware. The study was further limited to a random sample (n=377) of landowners, who were selected to receive a questionnaire.

Subject Selection

From the county auditor's database, a random sample of 377 landowners was selected to receive a mail questionnaire. Sampling error was controlled by ensuring an adequate sample size and by using proper techniques of random sampling.

Due to frame error, 81 questionnaires from the original mailing were returned as undeliverable due to problems such as moved with no forwarding address, forwarding time expired, no mail receptacle, no such number, and no such street.

Instrumentation

A written questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed by the researcher to collect data for the research study. A five-part instrument was designed specifically for Delaware County citizens and collected data relating to the research objectives: a) perceptions toward farmland preservation, b) recall level of urban sprawl news coverage, c) involvement level in urban sprawl issues, d) personal characteristics, e) differences among levels of involvement and knowledge of land use issues, and f) the relationship between information recall levels and perceptions toward farmland preservation.

Data Collection

Data for the study were collected by mail questionnaire. The questionnaire guaranteed anonymity to respondents and was coded only to allow for necessary follow-up contact.

The deadline for data collection was March 15, 2000. An overall response rate of 61% was achieved. An additional incentive for respondents was the chance to be entered into a random drawing for a \$50 money order. The drawing was held on March 17, 2000.

To control for non-response error, a random sample of ten percent of the non-respondents was contacted by telephone to collect demographic data. These data were compared to corresponding data from the respondents to determine if there were significant differences between the two groups.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and correlational statistics were used to analyze the data collected using SPSS/PC+ statistical software. General measures of association were described according to Davis' (1971) conventions.

Summary of Findings

Objective 1: *To describe the population of Delaware County landowners on the following characteristics: age, gender, education level, occupation, income level, length of residence, and farm background.*

Through the research performed and the information obtained, it was found that 59% of respondents were male and the mean age of respondents was 49 years old. The highest percentage (36%) of respondents had a bachelor's degree and 65% worked full-time. Twenty-four percent of respondents reported an approximate gross household income of \$100,000-\$199,999 for 1999. The mean length of residency was 18 years and 60% of respondents lived in a township.

Objective 2: *To determine the perceptions of Delaware County landowners toward farmland preservation.*

The findings indicate that the citizens of Delaware County are concerned about farmland preservation, however, they weren't willing to pay very much to preserve the land. Forty-two percent were unwilling to pay anything to protect Delaware County farmland on an annual basis, while 40% were willing to pay between \$1-\$74 per year.

Respondents were in favor (69%) of establishing a greenbelt around their community and using tougher zoning laws (69%). Respondents were almost evenly split on whether farmland or

open space was most important to preserve with 45% responding in favor of farmland and 43% indicating that open space is most important to them.

Diminishing Ohio farmland is viewed as a major problem by 71% of respondents, while 71% also either agree or strongly agree that diminishing farmland is a problem in Delaware County. A high 73% of respondents agree that a farm is open space.

An increase in county taxes to fund either farmland preservation or open space was opposed by 59% and 52% of respondents, respectively. However, in both cases, 30% neither favored nor opposed an increase in county taxes, but were undecided.

Objective 3: To determine the level of recall of urban sprawl news coverage in local, state and national media outlets by Delaware County landowners.

Respondents appeared to lack an adequate level of recall of urban sprawl news coverage in local, state and national media outlets. People watched local news on television a mean of five days per week, national news on television four days per week and listened to the radio four days per week. Respondents read a local daily newspaper a mean of five days per week. A majority (61%) of respondents said they had either read or heard something about urban sprawl in the news media within the past year. However, a large percentage either answered incorrectly or did not know how to answer basic urban sprawl facts. Only two of 18 statements had more than 35% of respondents answering correctly. Citizens may have read or heard about urban sprawl, but they appeared to remember few details about what they had learned. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents did not know which presidential candidate has made urban sprawl the centerpiece of his campaign. And, only 4% knew that Delaware County was not among the 30 most sprawl-threatened cities in the United States, as rated by the Sierra Club.

Objective 4: *To determine the level of involvement of Delaware County landowners in local governmental affairs.*

Respondents are not very active in local governmental affairs with 57% indicating no involvement. Twenty-two percent indicated involvement in one of the following activities: held public office or served on a government board/committee in last five years; contacted a local government official about a land use issue in the last year; or attended a local or regional government meeting in the last year. Twenty-one percent reported involvement in at least two of the activities previously listed.

Objective 5: *To determine the differences among three levels of involvement in local governmental affairs and knowledge of land use issues.*

No statistically significant differences existed among the three levels of involvement in local governmental affairs and level of recall of land use issues by respondents.

Objective 6: *To determine the relationship between level of information recall and perceptions toward farmland preservation.*

A non-statistically significant low correlation was found between level of information recall and perceptions toward farmland preservation.

Conclusions

It is important to remember that all conclusions drawn from this study apply only to the randomly sampled group of landowners who own less than five acres outside the city limits of Delaware. The study could be expanded to the wider universe of all Delaware County citizens who own less than five acres, outside of the city of Delaware. Also, because of frame error and

the need to select a subgroup of respondents from the phone book, results of this study cannot be generalized to the population of Delaware County landowners who own less than five acres outside the Delaware city limits.

However, it is fair to draw conclusions from the group of landowners in Delaware County who responded to the study. A majority of respondents were white and there were more male than female respondents. The mean age of respondents was 49 years old with a range of 16-85 years old.

The citizens of Delaware County are concerned about land use issues, but do not seem to understand or realize the depth of the problem. The respondents were not aware of the facts surrounding land use issues. Respondents wrote comments favoring tougher zoning laws to help with preservation, but they also think landowners should be able to do whatever they want with their land. The respondents were closely split between preserving farmland and open space. They also see both the loss of farmland and the loss of open space as a problem in Delaware County.

For the amount of news coverage the respondents were subjected to, their level of recall of urban sprawl news was low. They do not seem to remember either specific or general facts concerning urban sprawl news items. Urban sprawl seemed to trigger respondents' emotions, and many wrote in the comment section how the survey opened their eyes to how uninformed they were. Numerous respondents indicated that they would be learning more about the issue because of the questionnaire.

The respondents did not seem to be very involved in governmental affairs in Delaware County. Many people responded by saying they were not at all active. Respondents who were involved in governmental affairs did not seem to have an increased awareness of land use issues.

That is to say, even if they attended meetings and contacted governmental officials, they still were not aware of the facts surrounding farmland preservation and land use.

Similarly, people who knew the facts of farmland preservation did not have a different perception toward farmland preservation than someone who knew very little about the issue.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the review of literature, the following recommendations were made:

1. Newspapers were the top communication outlet for urban sprawl information, followed by television, then radio. The respondents did not read many magazines. Thus, it should prove beneficial to take advantage of the media outlet used most often. It is also important to make stories more applicable to the people. Level of recall of urban sprawl news coverage was low with a large majority of respondents unable to answer questions related to urban sprawl on the local, state, and national levels. Urban sprawl is spreading throughout Delaware County and citizens need to be aware of the potential effects sprawl will bring.

2. Developing a targeted public relations campaign would be a recommended course of action. The Delaware County Farmland Preservation Task Force should decide what message they want to present to the public and what they want the public to know. Once this message is clear and concise for everyone to understand, acknowledge, and remember, the task force should surge ahead with getting their message out through an educational campaign. A direct mailing to everyone in the county or possibly a billboard campaign, listing the basic facts would help in getting the message out and may be more effective than relying on mass media messages. For example, people need to know that Delaware County is the 8th fastest- growing county in the

United States and the fastest-growing county east of the Mississippi River, as well as being the fastest-growing county in Ohio. These facts should get people's attention, if presented in a clear and concise manner.

3. Having an accurate mailing list, instead of an inaccurate list from the auditor's office, would have helped this study. An inaccurate mailing list caused a delay in the project when many questionnaires were returned as undeliverable. Frame inaccuracies also impacted upon who the study results could be generalized to.

4. Better understanding citizen perceptions and where citizens receive information about urban sprawl will allow state and local agencies to better target intended audiences, communicate their messages more effectively, and, ultimately, make better informed policy-level decisions.

Need for Further Study

Findings from this project should prove helpful to the Rural/Urban Task Force at The Ohio State University, the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Office of Farmland Preservation, and the Delaware County Farmland Preservation Task Force as these groups work to develop policies and legislation aimed at preserving farmland and lessening the threat of environmental consequences. Urban sprawl is threatening the entire state of Ohio, as well as hitting many other areas of the country.

It would be interesting and applicable to survey the entire county of Delaware to better understand citizens' level of information, perceptions, and attitudes toward land use issues. The data could be separated into different zip codes, to see if similarities or differences exist among various areas of the county.

Another interesting study would be to concentrate on the central city of Delaware to understand its citizens' perceptions and attitudes toward farmland preservation. By the same token, an additional study could be undertaken on citizens who own more than five acres to learn their thoughts concerning selling their land for development or preserving the land for farm use or open space.

This study could also be expanded to include each county in Ohio to provide a broad synopsis of what is occurring throughout the state. Different areas of the state could be compared and contrasted to see if similarities or differences exist among Ohioans perceptions.

Surveying people who move out of the central cities into the suburbs, to learn what motivates them to do so, would be an interesting study. What are the different reasons behind their moves? Is there something that would keep them in town? Farmland preservation task forces throughout Ohio and governmental officials may be able to use such information to develop incentives that would encourage people to remain closer to cities and towns and to not destroy farmland and open space with continued sprawl.

Another area that could be explored is what inner-city impacts result when citizens leave the city for the surrounding countryside. The inner-city is often ignored when land use issues are discussed, but inner-city interests should also be represented at the table.

It would also be appropriate to undertake varying methodologies in additional studies. Focus groups or telephone surveys could be used to gather additional data. It is important to understand where people are coming from before trying to convince them to change their thoughts about an emotional issue, such as land use and farmland preservation. For the task force to develop a successful public relations campaign, both quantitative and qualitative data would be useful.

APPENDIX A
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Land Use Issues in Delaware County



A survey sponsored by:
The Ohio State University
and
The Delaware County
Farmland Preservation Task Force

Part I. Land Use in Delaware County

A. Which definition listed below most closely relates to what the term “farmland preservation” means to you? (Circle one number only)

1. Preserving open space
2. Preserving farmland for a profitable farm industry
3. Preserving farmland for small-scale operations
4. Preserving rural character

B. Please indicate if you favor, oppose, or are undecided in your feelings about each of the following land preservation scenarios listed below. (Circle one number only)

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
1. The establishment of a zone or “greenbelt” around your community where new homes, businesses or stores could not be built on land that is currently undeveloped.	1	2	3
2. The ability of landowners to sell easements to governments in order to protect their land for agricultural use.	1	2	3
3. The use of tougher zoning laws in Delaware County to halt the momentum of sprawl.	1	2	3
4. An increase in county taxes to help pay for farmland preservation.*	1	2	3
5. An increase in county taxes to help pay for open space.	1	2	3
6. An increase in user fees, such as building permit fees and planning subdivision fees, to help pay for farmland preservation.	1	2	3

**** For the purposes of this study, we define farmland preservation as preserving land so that any type of agricultural endeavor can occur on that ground.***

C. Which is the most important to preserve? (Circle only one)

1. Farmland
2. Open space
3. Other _____

D. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements related to land use. Circle 1 if you Strongly Disagree, 2 if you Disagree, 3 if you Agree, 4 if you Strongly Agree, and 5 if you Don't Know. (Circle only one number for each item)

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
1. Diminishing farmland is a major problem across Ohio.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Diminishing farmland is a major problem in Delaware County.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Sprawl is simply a by-product of progress.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Land developers are to blame for the loss of open space in our county.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Individuals should be able to do what they want with their own land.	1	2	3	4	5
6. An increase in the county's population is a good thing.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I tend to think of a farm as open space.	1	2	3	4	5

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
8. Urban sprawl is the fastest-growing threat to the U.S. environment.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Urban sprawl is having a negative impact on the quality of life in Delaware County.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Efforts should be made to control urban sprawl in Delaware County.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Delaware County tax dollars should be used to pay for roads, sewers, police protection and other needs related to urban sprawl.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Delaware County should permanently preserve farmland for farming.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am willing to pay to protect farmland within Delaware County.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Local government should regulate development for the common good.	1	2	3	4	5

E. Approximately how much would you be willing to pay per year to permanently protect farmland in Delaware County?

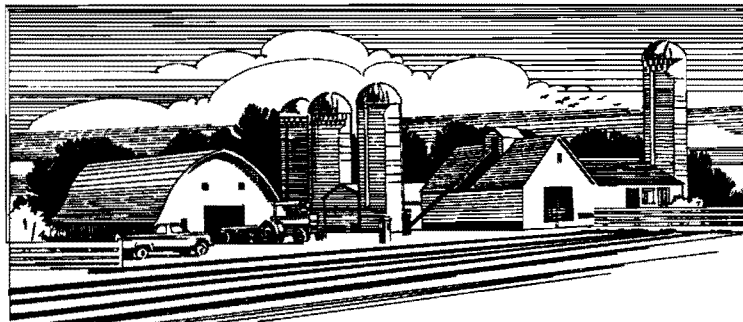
(Circle one answer only)

1. Zero
2. \$1-\$19
3. \$20-\$49
4. \$50-\$74
5. \$75-\$99
6. Over \$100
7. Other _____

F. Which source of public money do you feel would be the best source for funding farmland preservation efforts?

(Circle one answer only)

1. Property tax
2. Income tax
3. Sales tax
4. Revenue bonds
5. Conveyance fees that are assessed when property is transferred into a new owner's name
6. Recoupment fees assessed when agricultural land is sold
7. None - no public money should be used for farmland preservation



Part II. Community Perception and Involvement

- A. Here is a list of things people have said may pose a threat to the future of Delaware County. Please indicate if you feel each of the following DOESN'T THREATEN, SOMEWHAT THREATENS or SEVERELY THREATENS the future of Delaware County.
(Circle only one number for each item)**

	<u>Doesn't Threaten</u>	<u>Somewhat Threatens</u>	<u>Severely Threatens</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
1. Increase in taxes.....	1	2	3	4
2. Declining quality of schools.....	1	2	3	4
3. Increase in crime.....	1	2	3	4
4. Loss of profitable farms.....	1	2	3	4
5. Unplanned growth.....	1	2	3	4
6. Indifference toward the community..	1	2	3	4
7. Lack of leadership.....	1	2	3	4
8. Failure of people to work together...	1	2	3	4
9. Loss of community spirit.....	1	2	3	4
10. More people moving into Delaware County.....	1	2	3	4
11. Loss of farmland.....	1	2	3	4
12. Loss of open space.....	1	2	3	4

B. In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in local community activities and events? (Circle one answer only)

1. Very active
2. Somewhat active
3. Not very active
4. Not at all active

C. What exactly constitutes “local government” to you? (Circle all that apply)

1. County
2. Township
3. Watershed
4. Municipality

D. Compared to other people in your neighborhood, how would you describe your level of involvement in Delaware County urban sprawl and land use issues? (Circle one answer only)

1. Very active
2. Somewhat active
3. Not very active
4. Not at all active

E. How involved are you in local governmental affairs? Have you... (Circle one answer for each statement)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1. Held public office or served on a government board or committee in Delaware County IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS.....	1	2
2. Contacted a local government official about a land use issue IN THE LAST YEAR.....	1	2
3. Attended a local or regional government meeting IN THE LAST YEAR (city council, planning and zoning commission, rural water district, etc.)	1	2

Part III. Media Habits

**A. Which weekly national news magazines do you read regularly?
(Circle all that apply)**

1. *Time*
2. *Newsweek*
3. *Business Week*
4. *U.S. News and World Report*
5. None
6. Other _____

B. How many days per week do you watch national news programming on television? (For example, network news, CNN, This Week, Washington Week in Review, 60 Minutes, Dateline, 20-20, etc.)

_____ days per week

C. How many days per week do you watch local news on television?

_____ days per week

D. How many days per week do you listen to national and/or local news on the radio?

_____ days per week

E. How many days per week do you read a national newspaper such as *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, etc.

_____ days per week

- F. How many days per week do you read a local daily newspaper, such as *The Columbus Dispatch* or *The Delaware Gazette*?**

_____ days per week

- G. How many days per week do you read a local weekly newspaper, such as *Delaware This Week*, *Olentangy Valley News*, or a *Suburban News Publication*?**

_____ days per week

- H. Which local newspapers do you read on a regular basis?
(Circle all that apply)**

1. *The Columbus Dispatch*
2. *Delaware Gazette*
3. *Delaware This Week*
4. *Olentangy Valley News*
5. Suburban News Publication (such as *This Week in Delaware*,
This Week in Powell, etc.)
6. *The Other Paper*
7. *Alive*
8. None
9. Other _____

- I. Have you read or heard anything about the issue of urban sprawl in the news media within the past year? (Circle one answer)**

1. Yes → If yes, please proceed to the next question.
2. No → If no, please skip to Part IV, Background Questions.

J. Please rank your top three communication outlets based on the amount of urban sprawl information you've received from each. (Place a 1 beside the outlet from which you've received the most urban sprawl information, a 2 beside the outlet from which you received the next most information, and a 3 beside the outlet from which you receive the next most information.)

1. Magazines _____
2. Newspapers _____
3. Television _____
4. Radio _____
5. Internet _____
6. Neighbors and/or friends _____
7. Other _____

K. Based on news accounts or things you've heard or seen within the past year, please indicate if the following statements are true, false, or you don't know. (Circle one answer per statement)

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
1. Yellow Springs' Whitehall Farm was sold to real estate developers.	1	2	3
2. In 1999, Ohio legislation was signed into law which allows state/local governments to buy development rights to farmland.	1	2	3
3. The Sierra Club placed two Ohio cities (Cincinnati and Delaware) among the 30 most sprawl-threatened cities in the U.S.	1	2	3
4. A <i>Columbus Dispatch</i> editorial pointed out how government causes urban sprawl.	1	2	3
5. President Bill Clinton spoke of sprawl in his 1999 State of the Union speech and advocated a livability agenda to control growth.	1	2	3

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
6. Of all candidates running for President in 2000, Republican George W. Bush Jr. is the one who has made urban sprawl the centerpiece of his campaign.	1	2	3
7. Members of the Delaware County Farmland Preservation Task Force are all connected to the agricultural industry in some way.	1	2	3
8. Wayne County was the first county in the state to complete a formal plan to preserve farmland.	1	2	3
9. The state of Ohio awarded \$10,000 planning grants to counties that created farmland preservation task forces.	1	2	3
10. A recent survey by Medina County social service agencies found that urban sprawl is a leading concern of county residents.	1	2	3
11. Federal officials have found a growing acceptance of anti-sprawl efforts in the Western United States.	1	2	3
12. The conservation group, American Rivers, has singled out urban sprawl as the greatest current threat to the nation's rivers.	1	2	3
13. With commodity prices so low and land prices rising in Delaware County, it's tough for farmers to resist selling their land.	1	2	3
14. November (1998), there were over 200 antisprawl ballot initiatives around the country.	1	2	3

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
15. Union County farmers have seen nearby land turned into housing developments, part of suburban sprawl from the central Ohio cities of Marysville and Delaware.	1	2	3
16. Akron was named the fifth most sprawl-threatened medium-sized city in the U.S., while Cincinnati and Cleveland were among the 13 most sprawl-threatened large cities, according to the Sierra Club.	1	2	3
17. Proposals to widen a strip of Interstate 71, south of Cuyahoga County, drew opposition from officials in Cleveland and adjacent suburbs who believed doing so would encourage urban sprawl.	1	2	3
18. In January 2000, a Carroll County farm couple became the first to take advantage of an Ohio law enabling farmers to sell or donate the development rights to their land.	1	2	3



Part IV. Background Questions

Finally, we need to ask a few questions about your background. This information, as with all information provided in this survey, will remain strictly confidential and will be used for statistical analysis only.

A. Your age (as of last birthday)? _____ years

B. Your sex? (Circle one answer)

1. Male
2. Female

C. Which best describes you? (Circle one answer)

1. African American
2. Asian
3. Hispanic/Latino
4. Native American/American Indian
5. White _____
6. Other _____

D. How long have you lived in Delaware County?

_____ years _____ months

E. Do you live in a: (Circle one answer)

1. Town
2. Township
3. Village
4. Other _____
5. Don't know _____

F. Do you own or rent your current residence? (Circle one answer)

1. Own
2. Rent
3. Have some other arrangement

G. Your highest level of formal education attained? (Circle only one)

1. Less than 9th grade
2. 9th to 12th grade, no diploma
3. High school graduate or equivalency
4. Some college; associate degree; or, completed technical school
5. Bachelor's degree
6. Graduate or professional degree

H. Your present employment status? (Circle only one)

1. Full-time
2. Part-time
3. Retired
4. Full-time homemaker
5. Student
6. Unemployed
7. Other _____

I. What was your approximate gross household income from all sources, before taxes, for 1999? (Circle only one range)

1. \$29,999 or less
2. \$30,000 - \$49,999
3. \$50,000 - \$59,999
4. \$60,000 - \$69,999
5. \$70,000 - \$79,999
6. \$80,000 - \$89,999
7. \$90,000 - \$99,999
8. \$100,000 - \$199,999
9. \$200,000 or more

J. Please use the space below for any additional comments you might have concerning land use in Delaware County.

This concludes the Delaware County land use issues survey. Thanks so much for your time and cooperation! Please return this survey in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope by Wednesday, March 8, to Shevon R. Johnson, 2120 Fyffe Road, 204 Ag Admin. Bldg., The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210-1067.

This code number, _____, will be used for follow-up purposes only. Individual data or comments will not be reported in any way as to reveal the source. All data will be confidential and grouped for reporting.



APPENDIX B
PANEL OF EXPERTS

Panel of Experts

Panel Member	Position
Dr. Janet L. Henderson	Associate Professor Leader, Program Development and Evaluation Ohio State University Extension The Ohio State University
Dr. Donald W. Thomas	Associate Professor Dept. of Human and Community Resource Development The Ohio State University
Dr. Sherrie R. Whaley	Assistant Professor Dept. of Human and Community Resource Development The Ohio State University
Robert P. Leeds	Extension Agent, Agriculture/Natural Resources Ohio State University Extension Delaware County, OH
Dr. Allen M. Prindle	Professor Dept. of Business, Accounting and Economics Otterbein College Westerville, OH

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTERS FOR

FIRST AND SECOND MAILING OF QUESTIONNAIRE



Department of Human and
Community Resource Development

208 Agricultural
Administration Building
2120 Fyffe Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1067

Phone 614-292-6321
FAX 614-292-7007

February 9, 2000

Name

Address

City, State Zip

Dear Delaware County landowner:

Did you know that Delaware County is the 8th fastest-growing county in the United States, the fastest-growing county east of the Mississippi, and the fastest-growing county in Ohio? Along with this growth has come a need to learn what county residents think about land-use issues.

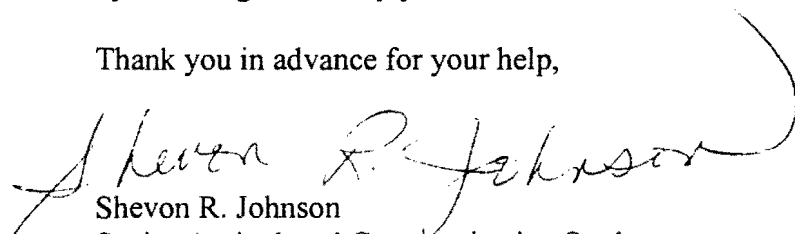
As part of my honors project at The Ohio State University, I am conducting a study to determine your knowledge and perceptions of land-use issues. This study is being co-sponsored by the Delaware County Farmland Preservation Task Force.

You are one of 377 Delaware County residents randomly selected to participate in this important study. I would appreciate receiving your input so that the results will truly reflect the views of county residents. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the preaddressed, stamped envelope by Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2000.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The questionnaire has a code number so that I may check off your name when the questionnaire is returned.

Please enjoy the enclosed Valentine sucker as you complete the survey. In addition, just by returning the survey you'll have the chance to win \$50 in a drawing held on March 15.

Thank you in advance for your help,



Shevon R. Johnson
Senior Agricultural Communication Student
The Ohio State University



Department of Human and
Community Resource Development

208 Agricultural
Administration Building
2120 Fyffe Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1067

Phone 614-292-6321
FAX 614-292-7007

February 23, 2000

Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Delaware County landowner:

Two weeks ago you received a letter and survey from me concerning the land-use issues facing Delaware County residents. I am enclosing a new survey for you to complete in case you have misplaced the first one, or threw it out. The results of this project are really important to my honors project at The Ohio State University, as well as the Delaware County Farmland Preservation Task Force.

Again, you are one of 377 Delaware County residents randomly selected to participate in this study. I would appreciate receiving your input so that the results will truly reflect the views of county residents. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the preaddressed, stamped envelope by Wednesday, March 8, 2000.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The questionnaire has a code number so that I may check off your name when the questionnaire is returned.

Please enjoy the enclosed hard candy as you complete the survey. In addition, just by returning the survey you'll have the chance to win \$50 in a drawing held on March 15.

Thank you in advance for your help,

Shevon R. Johnson
Senior Agricultural Communication Student
The Ohio State University

P.S. If you've returned your survey, please disregard this letter.

APPENDIX D

REMINDER POST CARD TO NON-RESPONDENTS



Dear Delaware County Resident,

Approximately a month ago, you received our land usage questionnaire in the mail. If you have not returned it, please take a few moments, fill it out, and return it by April 12, 2000.

Thank you for your cooperation! (Please disregard this notice if you have already sent your questionnaire back.)

Shevon Johnson
The Ohio State University

APPENDIX E

LETTER TO WINNER OF RANDOM DRAWING



Department of Human and
Community Resource Development

208 Agricultural
Administration Building
2120 Fyffe Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1067

Phone 614-292-6321
FAX 614-292-7007

March 30, 2000

Dear Mr. Pietrangelo,

I am pleased to inform you that you are the winner of our \$50.00 drawing!
Congratulations! This money order is made out with your name on it and may be used for anything you wish.

Thank you for participating in our study by filling out our questionnaire.

Shevon Johnson
Ohio State University

cc: Rob Leeds, Delaware County Farmland Preservation Task Force
Sherrie Whaley, Assistant Professor at Ohio State University

APPENDIX F
OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

Commissioners/Lack of Planning as Problem

1. I live in the city of Delaware which has very poorly planned growth, traffic flow, etc. I'm pleased with areas such as Parklands around Delaware Lake but I do feel farmland and open space (especially south of the city) is threatened. I'm not very familiar with farmland issues in Delaware County, but overall I favor "renewing" "recycling" of areas already developed instead of abandoning them and spreading developments into natural areas.
2. I think the effects of past commissioner's neglect of "planning" is criminal. The technology has been in place for years. Political bull-shit prevailed, not well thought-out urban sprawl planning. GIS is the answer. Many counties are smart enough to utilize the technology. Why not us?
3. Vision is essential when planning. Unfortunately, Delaware County reflects a "knee jerk" kind of mentality when it comes to growth. They are reactive rather than proactive. Please build an outerbelt to alleviate the stress on inner city roads. Also, build wider roads (should be responsibility of developer) in all future planning. Plan where new schools, parks, firestations, etc. must be located before handing the land over to the apartment builders. Finally, just say "Enough" and place moratoriums and building with zoning laws to preserve a decent quality of life for all.
4. Too many unused buildings in town of Delaware. Need better planning of developments. Leave land for animals, trees, clean water.
5. I think Ohio laws, letting Columbus, to take land in Delaware County, is by far our biggest problem.
6. Government needs to avoid meddling in free market or attempting to "preserve" an occupation/business – and stick to the real functions – safety/health/quality of life issues.
7. There is no "vision" for the future of Delaware County. A plan needs to be put into place. A. Columbus "takes" land for water; B. Developers add hundreds of homes and apartments (they should be assessed \$ thousands to supply schools, police, fire, roads, water, sewage, etc.; C. Our streets and roads are full with traffic; D. Our once beautiful bustling downtown cannot compete with Walmart strip malls. Your questionnaire is stated as if the farmland owner is to blame for this situation. Why is it assumed that the farmland needs more taxes to save itself? Turn this around on the city or the developers "vision" in order for it to exist!
8. Thanks for the wake up call. I will get involved in some meetings to voice my opinions and fight against more gov't controls beyond requiring developers to pay for road and sewer improvements before they build the housing developments or shopping centers. Polaris should be 8 lanes NOW. This was a fairly good survey. My son is ABD in Soc Psyc and I've worked on some of these. What % of 377 respond?

9. I would agree to pay more taxes to protect farmland and open space if I were sure that these extra funds were dedicated for those purposes rather than end up in the general fund.
10. Not happy with the way Columbus handled the upground water issues. Trying to take large parcels of land by eminent domain in the SW area of the city. We fought Columbus and won. Columbus did buy land in the NW part of the county – a less populated area.
11. The big developers seem to have the upper hand in this area. They get what they want, both in Columbus and Delaware County. Then the residents are stuck with paying for the infrastructure, schools, and the urban sprawl problems. The rivers are being ruined with the construction, increased drainage, and lawn chemicals.

Low-Density/High Density

1. Part I.C., We need to keep Delaware County low density. There are too many developments going in. (More than 2 houses per acre.)
2. I would like to see all lots for homes to be 5 acres or parkland to equal out to 5 acres.
3. Our area has 1 house per acre- very acceptable. The architecture of some new buildings- and too small lots for new construction in Powell, O. is disgusting! The rural atmosphere is more to our liking quality of life. (Traffic etc.) We are thrilled with the news that the “Traphagan” property on Seldom Seen Road will be preserved. A really good survey.
4. The housing dev. in Southern and Eastern Del. Co is scary. Olentangy schools are overcrowded. Buckeye Valley has always struggled greatly for funds. I do think that farms should be preserved, but do not believe taxation is the answer. The U.S. government should allow the farmer to create his/her own markets and sell wherever. Most businesses that are growing are using a “world wide” approach. Our farmer’s grains are sold by the U.S. Gov. to foreign countries. Why does the Gov. control grain production through pricing when millions starve throughout the world?
 Shevon, There are many issues involved in your survey. I would like you to send me your survey results. I was raised in rural Del. Co. and now reside in Del. City. I would have moved to the Del. Co. except southern Del. Co. is too expensive for 70,000.xx family incomes. The land costs are too high initially and taxes in Olentangy are really high. Northern Del. Co. is Buckeye Valley. I grew up in B.V. district. I remember going door-to-door with stickers and pleas of help during school bond elections just to keep the doors open. When will the state get involved to regulate dollars equitably?
5. I moved into Liberty Township for the quieter surroundings, the quality of the schools, its proximity to work (Mt. Air). While growth is inevitable, my main concern

is the imitation of other parts of ventral Ohio – Hamilton/Morse/Sawmill strip centers with high density apts behind – with no planned infrastructure highway to handle the additional load. Columbus’ march northward is the major engine of Del. Co. sprawl.

6. Large lot home construction in rural areas is creating a serious potential storm water control and need for drainage issues. Impact fees are needed to ensure quality of life for rural homeowners: protect ag drainage systems; future road improvement; future storm water needs; other public service – fire/police.
7. The biggest threat is traffic congestion on the major and arterial roads. I know my roads’ traffic has increased to my dismay.
8. Flag lots should be abolished.
9. I am opposed to all the golf courses and developments being built in Delaware Co. The increase in little, speeding drivers and lack of concern for property owners make me sick!
10. High-density housing should be emphasized for higher-income groups. Preservation to south may inhibit Columbus’ encroachment into Delaware. Farmland preservation is vital to long-term survival as population continues to increase!
11. There are too many developments creating more traffic than the roads can handle. No places for the animals to live. Everyone should have the right to do as they please with their land if they are not harming others or creating an eye source. Good luck to you!
12. I live in S. Delaware Co. near Westerville. I have seen several new developments spring up as well as township “bills” shot down which would protect the rural character of the area. My family and I moved here for the rural character and less traffic. However, new shopping developments and communities are being built on all sides of us. We are considering a future move North to Knox County (Centerberg) to get the rural/country feel from a home and community.
13. Stop building overcrowded housing developments. Improve roadways to support the increasing traffic patterns that are developing. Polaris will turn into another Sawmill Road debacle.

Zoning Laws

1. Present zoning regulations are not always followed, nor enforced. They change a LOT. Developer usually gets his way.
2. All developers should be assessed impact fee such as they have in Florida. All developers should be held to zoning law – held accountable for streets, roads, schools – and adequate green space and parks. One doesn’t build 200,000 homes on 75’ lots.

3. I am quite concerned over zoning and land use issues. I do not want to see all our land commercialized. We must protect natural resources, wildlife. The environment in general. I am somewhat less concerned about farming issues, but b/c it contributes to open space and a way of life, it seems important to me.
4. Delaware County has it's own way of trying to keep building of new homes down – it's called zoning and their inspectors – Delaware County is almost impossible to build in without troubles. Many have given up and moved to other counties.

Nice Comments

1. Thank you for the heart sucker!
2. Hope this helps.
3. We are in Genoa Township and so far we are pleased with how the urban sprawl has been handled. Everyone should attend their local town meetings to voice their opinion on improvements to their area.

Pro Farmers

1. Farmers should have the right to do with what they want with their land.
2. Over the past 27 years, I have seen small farms gradually disappear and the remaining farms effected by the increased presence of commuters. Many of the people moving to the country don't understand what Ag is about. That it has smells, noises, and a sense of community.
3. Is there any one in the county that has land sufficient to make a living farming, unless a grandson or some type of special farming, so why save it?
4. Provide tax breaks for landowners who sell their development rights. Tax farmers on the agricultural potential of their land, not the development potential. Provide incentives for landowners to donate their development rights. Government should buy non-profitable farmland for use as natural areas or green corridors.
5. I am surprised at how uninformed I am being a daughter of a farm girl. My mom still owns a farm, yet, I haven't paid attention to this problem. I am very disappointed to see so much building and so little green space!
6. I really want to see us keep our farmland in Delaware County. Growth is good, but I hope we can keep our close community!

7. I believe that all farmland in this country is diminishing at way too fast of a rate. We are becoming more and more dependent on foreign food.
8. There does not appear to be a shortage of farmland in America, because containing improvements in productivity here resulted in surpluses of food products and farmland. Financing farmland preservation appears to have inherent problems; at this point, school levies go down more often than not. Farmland preservation sounds good, but it may be more an idealistic goal than a realistic goal.
9. Prior to coming to Delaware, I lived in Hilliard. Our house was near a farm – on a summer day you could hear and sometimes smell the cows. Two years later – miles of houses and all greenspaces were gone. Schools were 600-1,200 students per grade. Inside 270, huge communities are abandoned, shopping complexes (such as along Henderson Road) torn down and left in rubble. Similarly, Sawmill Rd is becoming a ghost town while developers furiously build the same shop five miles away on Rt. 23. Sad, when will the new outer belt encircle Delaware, Columbus and Lancaster?
10. I feel like I have been hypocritical in my attitude regarding urban sprawl. I move into a development that transformed a wooded area near Alum Creek Dam into a collection of houses. I used to have deer in my yard every day--now I rarely see them. Since I moved into my residence over 3 years ago, I have counted approximately 15 deer, which have been killed crossing the road in front of my development. There is farmland across from our development where deer go to graze.
11. The ag community of northern Delaware Co. if maintained is large enough to be viable because it is part of a good ag community to the north.
12. Agree that urban sprawl is a serious threat to farmland and remaining open space. Believe it is best managed at the local (township) level through careful planning and land use management. Careful, controlled growth is not necessarily a threat and may ultimately benefit the citizens and quality of life in Delaware County. Good luck with your project!

Open Space/Wildlife Preservation

1. Many items should be considered: 1- establish woodland resources or corridors; 2- establish rules for developers to create open areas for recreation/nature; 3- require builders to set aside land for schools; 4- establish a strong park system.
2. The most important thing to me personally is open space. I value the family farm as part of tradition and as valuable in and of itself – but it's closed to the public! I think that containing sprawl is an exercise in diplomacy – i.e., there are many, and often conflicting, interests to be reconciled. Property rights need to be respected – they're basic to our systems. The purchase of development rights seems a good approach, funded by a tax on new developments plus possibly a modest tax on residents. I wish I had a better grasp of the subject, but those are my thoughts at this point.

3. Parks – natural with nature trails, areas set aside for nature preserves.
4. The reason I moved to Delaware County was because it was one of the few surrounding areas that was semi-rural (which added to its beauty), the sense of community, focus on children, excellent school district and reasonable taxes. I, as well as my children, enjoy the sheep, horse, corn farms and open spaces. What I fear is another area like Dublin--congested, commercial, and materialistic. We have the convenience of necessary amenities (shopping, etc.) without ruining our environment, attractiveness. Thank you for letting me participate in your survey.
5. I am opposed to any new taxes to preserve land except for those levies that can be voted on to establish parks or wildlife preserves.
6. I was raised in Del. Co. from age 6 weeks. I have great concern with regard to loss on the integrity and beauty of the land to Delaware County. The wooded areas, rivers, streams, and beautiful farms. Of greatest concern to me are the loss of landmarks; IE, Kingman Hill area, 315, Alum Creek Valley area, and Scioto River. On some days, it seems too late for preservation. A lack of planning on the part of county commissioners and city government and apathy of residents is of greatest concern to me, in preserving the community for my children.
7. I would like the natural beauty of Delaware County, and specifically the village of Powell, to remain as unspoiled as possible.

Other Comments

1. I just want to clarify that we live within the Westerville City limits and are still more associated with the “happenings” in Franklin County and Westerville schools even though our house resides (barely) in Delaware County.
2. When the common good comes up against personal greed, never assume the common good will win.
3. FYI – We moved out of Delaware County to California six months ago This wasn’t forwarded until today (Wed. 23rd) which was your deadline. But since you went to so much trouble (and expense) I thought the least we could do was return this, even though it’s probably not valid since we no longer reside in Delaware County.
4. Personal opinion – majority of preservation advocates have their home in a rural environment, and seem to begrudge others the right to. Property value should be determined by what an owner wants to and can do with their own property, and not by what others think he should do.
5. Don’t sell my name or give it out to any lists.

6. My wife and I are new to Delaware County and as such are part of the growth. I favor controlled, planned growth that is well thought out by community leaders and elected officials.
7. Land preservation is a misnomer. Land does not disappear simply because it is used for a different purpose. Farmland preservation is desirable when owners choose to farm. Farmland should not and cannot be set aside for those who do not own it and just want to view it from a homesite. Farmland preservation, in the final analysis, can only create problems for all citizens in terms of a loss to landowners, upkeep of all this open space and government bungling with resultant increases in taxes to all citizens.
8. I am increasingly torn between an individual's right to use his land and community interest. But developers should have to pay an impact fee. Property tax is becoming a great hardship and should be exchanged for an income tax.
9. I started filling this out, but decided that since we are on the border of Delaware and Franklin, live in Dublin my answers might hurt the survey.
10. I think we need to be careful not to put too much weight on what organizations like the Sierra Club have to say because their agendas are skewed and they find information to try to justify their predetermined positions. Growth is good for an area, but it should be controlled by the community. We also believe that preservation moneys could come from sources other than taxes or that perhaps legislation could solve the situation by declaring certain land to be preserved and no tax money is needed.
11. Need a condensed newsletter on urban sprawling to the public. I do not have the knowledge of urban sprawling because it is probably sparing written.
12. I'm sorry this took so long to complete. I'm embarrassed to say I don't realize that much about specific issues (as demonstrated in section K). I just have a vague and general conception that urban sprawl exists and causes problems. I, in fact, live in a relatively new subdivision and have seen many more go up in a relatively short time. I wasn't going to submit this until I realized you probably need to know there are people like me who don't know the full impact of land-use issues in Delaware.



Department of Human and
Community Resource Development

208 Agricultural
Administration Building
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Phone 614-292-6321
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February 9, 2000

Dear Delaware County landowner:

Did you know that Delaware County is the 8th fastest-growing county in the United States, the fastest-growing county east of the Mississippi, and the fastest-growing county in Ohio? Along with this growth has come a need to learn what county residents think about land-use issues.

As part of my honors project at The Ohio State University, I am conducting a study to determine your knowledge and perceptions of land-use issues. This study is being co-sponsored by the Delaware County Farmland Preservation Task Force.

You are one of 377 Delaware County residents randomly selected to participate in this important study. I would appreciate receiving your input so that the results will truly reflect the views of county residents. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the preaddressed, stamped envelope by Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2000.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The questionnaire has a code number so that I may check off your name when the questionnaire is returned.

Please enjoy the enclosed Valentine sucker as you complete the survey. In addition, just by returning the survey you'll have the chance to win \$50 in a drawing held on March 15.

Thank you in advance for your help,

Shevon R. Johnson
Senior Agricultural Communication Student
The Ohio State University

Forcing Farmland Preservation on land owners can only compound stress and problems for those who have chosen to farm. Taking land by eminent domain, de-valuing land by closing down development, increasingly stringent zoning laws (already too restrictive), these are just some of the negative aspects of Farmland Preservation.

Dear Shevon

I don't think what I have read so far on land preservation is little more than a stop gap solution . Only helps for the present generation and nothing for the next generation ,it was said 20 years was proof the plan in the east was a workable solution ,that is just 1/4 my life and in that time I have seen it take the whole community all day to do what we do in minutes now ,where 100 acre was a big farm and whole family would helped, I can remember my six sisters my brother and I all hoeing corn,carrying a kerosene lantern to the barn to do chores,milking cow by hand, where today one person can operate a 1000 or more acres and the change I have seen, in the years to come will be will be greater yet also the problems for the farmer & the agri.district. will be greater.

I have heard people say, the home farm was to small for two family. It was after I was out of the service ,that Linda and I were married ,we were near thirty ,started on a share crop rented farm where Orange Point is now .We have probably lost as much land to housing as any one ,I could name the places but will just say we started as far south as Polaris ,One son is north of Marion and they are building a cross the road from his farm ,he had put a bid on it,but was over bid and is being laid out in lots.

As a farmer you may have a bad year or may be two or three in a row and you have payment on your farm as well as equipment to meet.This happen to us after we purchase our first farm, a year so wet we got stuck with the hay baler,the hay was of poor quality and we also had to buy some very high priced hay,as a result our milk production went down and so did the milk check,but we came through and got back on are feet ,our next encounter was after we had purchase another farm and , our next hit, was Linda first round of cancer,and nitrate poisoning in our herd , you wounded if your next milk check will keep you afloat another month, these are the kind of problem all farmer now as well in the future will face,but may be it was for the best for I then spent more time with the family,we had two boys and they both own there own farms ,never been in trouble,may be it is Gods way of telling you,you may not be here tomorrow, there are accidents that could cripple you for life, Linda, parents had hoped, of there son would taking over there farm operation but oldest died with asthma shortly after his marriage ,other heirs not interested in the farm ,so much think about. after we were married a year later her Dad told me that Linda told them she would never married a farmer for they had to work to hard ,she had a friend that had left the farm to work for the government and it was nice not to have go to the barn on Sunday morning ,a guarantee pay check, ,sick days off,week ends off,all holly days off,regard hours ,retirement in thirty years & etc,

I wander if some of the committee shouldn't ask them self why they left the farm or if they hadn't been raised on a farm what it would take to make them want to start the good life on farming.

I thought the idea for forming some type of family trust for the Agri. district was a very good way to get it started ,for people that are really interested in starting a Agri. district,money is not the issue.This was Bill Thurstons idea. If you start paying people to be in a Agri.district I am afraid it may create land barons. I know of people that have sold there high priced land and go to a new area and buy much more land ,pay more then the local people could afford to pay . My concern is will these people continue to farm or lease the land out to other and live on the investment,and do no farming.

If a district is set up it should be voted on only by the people in the district and should pass by a 60 %. I feel a Agri. district should include small

village even if the people there work in town it may give the farmers a place to get part time help ,it of a given size for some expansion & other things,and the Agri. district to be of size to make it practical with its own governing body similar to the city council ,for there needs will be much different then the city.and of course you are going to have problems and you need a local way to solve them.Probably all kind of law sued from people wanting break up the district so it will take big money to fight it . As I have found out.

The district size and the number of years it is a district before a renewal vote is taken is very important,may be thirty or forty years to start with . May be some type of land tax abatement but you pay the same amount of taxes as before the abatement was allow,but the balance go in a fund ,for a clinic , with attach helicopter pad for hospital movement, a retirement center where people can live out there lives near there friends,there should be some sort of meeting building for a governing body as well for meeting,a out door recreation grounds ,all in the same location so old and young alike can enjoy it and be apart of it .May be a grade school as city children and county kids seem to have different value.This should have a fund limit amount but can be changed as time demands.

I may be asking to much of this tax abatement fund but a percentage should be set aside to purchase land as it becomes available from those that weren't interested in staying in the Agri.district ,there are many reason why people would want to sell there land,to set a value could be by the governing body, could only to be rented to people in the district or purchase by a farmer that the city has crowded out,or any farmer that weren't in a Agri. district but willing to keep the farm a part of Agri. district. and not just a investment also a % limit to side of a farm . Why shouldn't these farmer have some of the benefits that the government workers have if they do it on there own. Also a catastrophe fund for those in the district. May be some way of controlling growth by limit the number of children that can live on the farm but can live in the village ,limited housing only to replace old one,new ones go in the village.It should be community problem .

Dose Eleen Benner have the right idea that the Government control our live Look At the city of Marion has dome to save there down town .

Land preservation for in ten years you equipment old.You rent or repair.

We are going to expand in agri.as well as other bus.

In one county in California they produce more milk them many state

In Iowa Francis Chils late 6.3 bu.make 400 bu. Top the acre.

Jim Gangal says how you going to make it back here.

When you get your price for the land sell it and invest your money to your need , farm or what you may want. Let not take a steep back .

How many farmer in Delaware county have this mas land.

February 14, 2000
Happy Valentines Day

Ms. Shevon R. Johnson
Senior Agricultural Communication Student
Room 204 Ag. Administration Bldg.
2120 Fyffe Road, OSU
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Dear Ms. Johnson,

Thank you for including me in your study of land-use issues particularly in Delaware County.

Unfortunately, I find the questionnaire lacking in its consideration of the farm family's equities and ownership rights. This is not a reflection upon your input in the matter, but rather upon those who organized the questions.

I am not a farmer, was not raised on a farm and am one of those people who bought a part of a farm for a home-site before zoning became both a benefit and a hindrance. In the past laws were made considering the health, welfare and safety of the community. Currently the zoning laws have little to do with these parameters and a lot to do with dollars. Recently I have become concerned with the plight of the farmer and his standing in the economic status of the community.

A little historical background might be worthwhile at this point. In biblical days the kings and lords owned the land. Then, as gifts for service to these owners, land was given to those who contributed to their master's causes. This was especially true in Europe and the idea carried over into America during colonial times. The United States gave land to soldiers to compensate for lack of funds to pay for their services. The United States did not consider that the American Indian had any rights to the land that they had lived on for hundreds of years. Then came the expansion of "America" and the land rush where settlers could "squat" on a parcel of land in the "west" and gain a deed to have and hold for their heirs and assigns forever.

Much of Ohio's farm owner-ships go back to these old land grant deeds. Over the years the farms have been subdivided among family members (children). As in all families, some children do not follow in their ancestor's footsteps. Those who may have been given a portion of a farm may have decided that some other form of lively-hood is to their liking. Their farm has an equity value to them and a means to provide capital for other ventures through its sale. There should be no restriction on their ability to sell to a non farming buyer. When a zoning board approves a land use change there should never be a referendum to change this status. The argument has already been expounded at the pre-approval meetings. It is usually those selfish people who are owned by the bank and who have only been in the community a few years that are the biggest belly-achers.

The case of Micro Electronics purchase option in Delaware County that would provide employment at salaries equal to or greater than that of the current population and income for the much needed school expansion and community services. It was turned down by referendum by people who came into the community less than ten years ago and who are voting to have these services paid for out of their own pockets as tax payments. Here is a case where the farm and many other adjoining acres were once a land grant tract nearly two centuries ago. The sale would have helped an owner-cancer patient.

Ms. Shevon R. Johnson
Land Use Issues
February 14, 2000
Page 2 of 2

As in the case of the Madison County wet lands preserve, the government and the holy envioren-mentalists are attempting to buy the lands for less than their worth as farm land with money that belongs to someone else. There is no consideration of the improvements made over the years to develop the land as agricultural improvements, such as field tiling, ditching, fencing etc. No consideration has been given to compensate for out buildings that will be destroyed in the wetland areas. No consideration has been given to the differential value of the farm equipment as to its worth in the farming operation vs. its resale value. No consideration has been given as to the purchase value of farm land to compensate the farmer in order to continue his profession in another area.

Let us suggest another scenario. You own a restaurant on a corner in town surrounded by older buildings that are not eligible as historical edifices. Your home was mortgaged in order to purchase the land and business. Your business is better than expected. The town has decided that this location is ideal for a community park and have decided to purchase several tracts of land, including yours, at the land only value through their right of eminent domain. No consideration is given to the value of your restaurant, your business or your mortgages. You have fallen into the same category as the farmer.

I believe that the equity that a farmer has acquired over the years and the value of his business should be of prime consideration in any land use planning and legislation. No one in his right mind would want this type of land grab to happen to him.

I hope that you might be able to consider the above arguments in the scope of your paper on Land Use Issues in Delaware County.

May I extend my good wishes to you upon your graduation from OSU, the possibility of extending your education and a happy and productive life in the future.

Very sincerely yours,

cc Sen. George Voinovich
 Sen. Mike DeWine
 Gov. Bob Taft
 US Rep. Debra Pryce
 Ohio Rep Jon Petersen
 Wm.F. Hartwig, US Fish & Wildlife Serv.
 Samuel Speck, Ohio Dept. Natural Resources
 The Delaware Gazette

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